

## **Wawona Covered Bridge Restoration**

The Wawona Covered Bridge, which spans the South Fork of the Merced River in Wawona, is a historical structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is one of two covered bridges located in a national park and is also one of only 13 in California. The original bridge was built in 1868 by Galen Clark and was later converted to a covered bridge in 1878 by the owners of the Wawona Hotel. It is located just north of the Wawona Hotel and is a significant feature at the Pioneer Yosemite History Center.

## Why is the bridge closed?

The Wawona Covered Bridge has been temporarily closed for structural repairs. The bridge is in poor condition due to extensive deterioration of the timber superstructure, which has resulted in an 8" sag. For safety reasons, the bridge will remain closed to all traffic until it has been repaired and restored.

## What is involved in the restoration process?

Preservation of the structure will involve replacing the deteriorated timbers by National Park Service Preservation Specialists using 19<sup>th</sup> century methods to replicate the handiwork of yesterday's craftsmanship. The lost art of hewing round logs into square timbers with specialty axes will be used to craft the new timbers. Mortice and tenon joints—typically used in 19<sup>th</sup> century timber framing—will then join the timbers and restore the structure.

Work will also include the following preservation tasks:

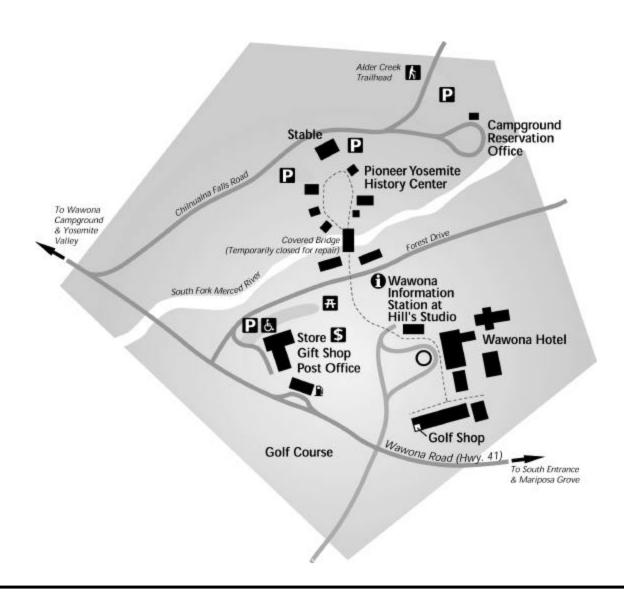
- Construct shoring to support the 115,000 lb. timber frame of the bridge
- Remove the 8" sag from superstructure, levelling the bridge
- Remove and replace all 7 of the deteriorated 14" x 14" x 30' transverse floor beams
- Repair the under mining of the bridge pier masonry in the riverbed
- Restore the structural stability to upstream and downstream timber frame truss assemblies
- Replace the undersized timber components in order to resist wind and snow loading
- Replicate hand hewed timbers using broad axes and traditional craftsmanship from 19<sup>th</sup> century practices

## When will the bridge reopen?

The first phase of structural repairs is schedule to be completed by early December 2002 or sooner, weather permitting.

How can I get to the Pioneer Yosemite History Center?

Visitors wishing to watch resoration in progress or to see the historic buildings at the Pioneer Yosemite History Center should drive north on Wawona Road to Chilnualna Falls Road, take a right, and park in the designated area near the stable. Walking along the side of Wawona Road is NOT recommended.



How can I learn more about historic preservation in Yosemite?

To learn more about Yosemite's ongoing historic preservation efforts, contact Craig Struble, park restoration specialist at 209/379-1220.

This and other Yosemite National Park improvement projects will be periodically updated on the park's planning web site. Visit www.nps.gov/yose/planning.